



Volunteer Testimony

HB 636- SUPPORT

Child Access Prevention Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage

Requirements

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House Judiciary

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Dear Chairman Clippinger, members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for receiving my testimony.

My name is Michael DeLong and I am a 29 year old resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, in District 20. I have lived in Silver Spring for the past five years. Before that, I worked for a nonprofit called Ceasefire Oregon that advocates against gun violence. We conducted a two year successful campaign to get background checks on all gun sales through the Oregon legislature, and advocated safe storage of guns so that children can't access them.

My testimony is in support of HB 636, and is based on my experience working for Ceasefire Oregon, my volunteering for Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, and my concerns as a Maryland resident who cares about the health and well being of my community.

HB 636 prohibits people from storing or leaving guns in a location where an unsupervised minor can gain access to the gun. It also establishes penalties if this law is violated. When household guns aren't stored safely or securely, the risk of injury or death goes up dramatically. Children are naturally curious, and when they find guns they often try to play with them.

This bill holds gun owners accountable for the safe storage of their guns and will help prevent unintentional shootings-it will stop injuries and help save lives. According to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 4.6 million children in the United States live in homes with at least one loaded, unlocked gun. And lots of children know where their parents keep their guns and have accessed them, even if their parents think otherwise.

Household guns are the most easily accessible guns for kids, and they are a major source of weapons used in school shootings, youth suicides, and unintentional shootings. A number of studies have shown that the risk of suicide and unintentional shootings among minors increases in homes where guns are kept loaded and/or unlocked.

This safe firearm storage bill will strengthen our already existing laws and help prevent gun deaths and injuries. As someone who has been fighting to stop gun violence for over seven years, I have seen many cases where a loaded gun is improperly stored, children find and begin playing with it, and the gun goes off and someone is hurt or killed.

No one should have to go through this tragedy. And older kids and teenagers may use these improperly stored guns to attempt to commit suicide-this bill will help prevent those tragedies as well.

Americans overwhelmingly support these safe gun storage laws to protect kids. I urge you to vote for this bill, report it favorably, and encourage your colleagues to vote for it as well.